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No. XXVI.—*Langkau Ampun* or *Piring* or The hut for submission or offering.

By Revd. Wm. Howell.

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A *langkau ampun* is erected for two reasons, either one of the inmates of the house has dreamed that the spirits (antu) said that they were hungry and wanted to eat, or because there is much sickness in the district or house.

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The Dyaks believe that there are a certain class of spirits that are omnivorous and wander all about the country. These spirits are called *antu gargasi*, they are gigantic in stature and bring sickness into the place, for the simple reason that they are hungry and want to devour mankind. To avoid the advent of these spirits into the house or village the people erect either one or two little huts on the side of the road leading to the house or village. In these huts are

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but ample offerings, and white flags are hoisted on the roofs. It is believed that when the spirits see the flags they understand at once that the people in the house or village submit to them, and that they have offerings for them in the huts. The spirits then ascend into the huts and eat the offerings, and return the same way they came.

In the course of my work I once questioned a man about his *langkau ampun*, why it was not built larger and higher than his own house, as the spirits were said to be of gigantic stature, and therefore would require extra room. He said that the spirits could make themselves any size they liked.

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whereabouts. The spirit he meets may take any form; he may come in human form and treat him kindly, or he may assume a hideous form and attack him.

A man *nampoks* for one of two reasons. Either he is fired with great ambition to shine in deeds of strength and bravery, and to attain the position of a Chief, and hopes to receive some charm (*pengaroh*) from the spirits, or he is suffering from some obstinate disease, and hopes to be told by some kindly spirit what he must do in order to be cured. It can easily be understood how the desire would in many cases bring about its own fulfilment. The unusual surroundings, the expected arrival of some supernatural being, the earnest wish acting upon a credulous and superstitious imagination in the solemn solitude of the jungle—all would help to make the man dream of some spirit or mythical hero.

The Dyak has no temple erected in honour of some god to which, like the ancients of the Western World, he can make a pilgrimage. He has no altar before which he can spend the night in order to receive revelations in dreams, but he goes instead to the lonely mountain-top, or the cemetery where so many heroes of the past have been buried, and makes his offering and lies to rest beside it. The circumstances are different, but the spirit and the object in both cases are the same. The story often told of a miraculous cure is also similar in each case.

There are certain rocks in different parts of Borneo which are called by the Dyaks *batu kudi* (stones caused by the wrath of the gods). A story is related in connection with each. The following are some of these mythical stories:—

1. In the bed of the Sesang River there is a rock

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797 Happily the Gospel message, though profound in truth, is very simple in form. A plain narration of the life of Jesus Christ always produces a deep impression upon the Dyak. It is quite a new revelation to him, the Incarnation of the Son of God, bringing him totally new thoughts and ideas of God.

A great help to the work of the Missionary is the example of some man who has bravely emancipated himself from the burdensome traditions of his forefathers, and puts his whole trust in God. There are many such living in the Saribas district, and they were a great help to the Mission work there. That a Dyak can succeed in his labours, or even exist for any length of time without the observance of bird omens, or paying heed to dreams, or continually making sacrifices to gods and spirits, is to Dyaks in general such a remarkable thing that it rouses their minds to consider what Christianity means. To give up heathen practices, and to pay no heed to the omens of birds, is but a small part of the Christian religion, but it sets men thinking. It is a mark of freedom from the slavery of tyrannous superstition, and clears the ground for the foundation of a real Christian belief and trust in God.

794 ●346 But it may be asked: "How are services provided for these Dyak Christians who live so far away from the Church and the Mission House?" Well, we do the best we can for them. By the side of each Dyak house where there are Christians we build a small prayer-house. It is a very plain and simple building, and is the same in material and style as their own houses. The Christian Dyaks build it themselves. They go out into the jungle and get whatever is necessary for it. It is an oblong structure, raised a few feet off the ground on posts of

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wood. The walls and the roof are of palm-leaf thatch, work which the natives can do themselves; the flooring is of laths of wood fastened down with cane or creepers. And there are no seats in the building—no forms or chairs—everyone sits on the floor, on which mats are spread. At one end we have a little table, which the natives make themselves, and that we use as an altar when we have a celebration of the Holy Communion. Altogether it is as primitive a house of worship as it is possible to imagine, but it is enough for necessary purposes, and is the best that can be done under the circumstances. The building does not last long, but is easily rebuilt where there is a will to do so. To build permanent churches would in most cases be useless waste, for the Dyaks are constantly moving their village houses to new sites.

The services held in these little prayer-houses are very reverent. The offertory at the celebration of Holy Communion is worthy of remark. At our up-country churches and prayer-houses, we receive in kind as well as in money. Dyaks very seldom have money, but they have rice, and that is the "kind" in which the offertory is made. The rice is brought in little baskets or cups, and emptied into a large basket. Sometimes eggs or fruit are given. The Missionary gives an equivalent in money for the rice, etc., collected, and that money is given to the man who has charge of the offertory. This "churchwarden" is some Christian living in the Dyak house near.

The Missionary has a very large district in his charge, and travelling is so difficult that he cannot very often visit the different houses where there are Christians; and the native teacher has also a large ground to cover, and